



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2008-38-R2-12/16

Date: January 26, 2017

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 259 McGrath Highway

Applicant Name: Paul Cook, Divine Signs
Applicant Address: 6 Norman Street, Everett, MA 02149
Owner Name: Herb Chambers of Somerville, Corp.
Owner Address: 259 McGrath Highway, Somerville, MA 02143
Agent Name: John Welch, Herb Chambers
Agent Address: 259 McGrath Highway, Somerville, MA 02143
Alderman: Maryann Heuston

Legal Notice: Applicant, Paul Cook, Divine Signs, and Owner, Herb Chambers of Somerville, Corp., seek a Special Permit Revision under SZO §5.3.8 in order to alter signage on the existing façade of the structure. IA Zone. Ward 2.

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – February 1, 2017

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The site is located in southeastern Somerville on a triangular piece of land formed by the intersection of McGrath Highway and Linwood Street. The existing structure on the site has single-, two-, four-, and six-story sections. The Herb Chambers Company has two brand franchises and corporate offices at the site.

A Special Permit with Site Plan Review was approved on September 3, 2008 (ZBA2008-38) to construct a 6,614 g.s.f (5,358 n.s.f) second story addition on the southwestern portion of the property above the existing single-story structure which serves as the "Smart Center". On November 4, 2009 the Zoning Board of appeals granted a revision for façade alterations for the existing two-story 50ft by 50ft concrete



and brick section of the building used as the showroom for the Mercedes Benz dealership.



2. Proposal: The Applicant is proposing to replace signage on the “Smart Center” façade. The proposal is to replace the sign that reads “smart center Boston” with a slightly wider sign that reads “AMG”, shown as E1 in the plans and measures 3’ – 4 1/2” tall and 28’ – 3 3/8” wide. The Applicant also proposes to replace the sign that reads “smart” with one of the same size that reads “AMG”, shown as E2 in the plans and measures 1’ – 5 1/8” tall and 12’ wide. AMG is a brand of Mercedes Benz that offers high performance specialty automobiles.

II. STAFF FINDINGS

Staff finds that the proposed changes would not significantly impact the original approval of the façade alterations nor will the changes be detrimental to the design of the structure.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Revision of Special Permit under §5.3.8.

Based on the materials submitted by the Applicant, Planning staff site visits, and the attached findings, the Planning Staff finds that the proposed revisions would improve the project, and that the development would remain consistent with the Special Permit, and recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested **REVISIONS to the SPECIAL PERMIT**.

Although the Planning Staff is recommending approval of the requested revisions, the following conditions should be added to the permits:

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes						
1	<p><u>This approval incorporates, updates and replaces conditions of all prior zoning approvals except the ZBA variances (case #1993-26) and (case #2002-36) for signage.</u></p> <p>Approval is to replace signage for the “Smart Center” showroom. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant and/or agent:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date (OSPCD date)</th> <th>Submission</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>December 22, 2016</td> <td>Initial application and plans submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>August 31, 2016</td> <td>Signage plans submitted to OSPCD</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Any changes to the approved elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive ZBA approval.</p>	Date (OSPCD date)	Submission	December 22, 2016	Initial application and plans submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	August 31, 2016	Signage plans submitted to OSPCD	BP/CO	ISD/PIng.	
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2	A code compliant fire alarm and suppression system shall be required.	BP/CO	FP							
3	The Applicant shall at his expense replace any existing equipment (including, but not limited to street sign poles, signs, traffic signal poles, traffic signal equipment, wheel chair ramps, granite curbing, etc.) and the entire sidewalk immediately abutting the subject property if damaged as a result of construction activity. All new sidewalks and driveways must be constructed of concrete subject to DPW approval.	CO	DPW							
4	All construction materials and equipment must be stored onsite. If occupancy of the street layout is required, such occupancy must be in conformance with the requirements of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the prior approval of the Traffic and Parking Department must be obtained.	During Construction	T&P							
5	Any HVAC or other rooftop equipment shall be screened with materials that are visually similar to the façade.	CO	PIng.							
6	<p>The proposed “Autohaus” façade alterations from the approved 2008 plans are void.</p> <p>The only valid and approved “Autohaus”-themed façade is dated 9/14/09.</p>	Building Permit	ISD/ PIng.							
7	The Applicant should consider acknowledging “Somerville” in the signage on its building and operations.	CO	PIng.							
8	The “Autohaus” signage shall be at the size and location depicted on the elevations.	CO	PIng.							
9	A sign shall be installed on the applicant's property that shall include the words "welcome" and "Somerville" in a location, style and content to be approved by Planning Staff.	CO	PIng.							
10	The Applicant shall reimburse the City for the cost of replacing the two street trees.	CO	ISD/DPW/PIng.							

Final Sign-Off				
11	The Applicant shall contact Planning Staff at least five working days in advance of a request for a final inspection by Inspectional Services to ensure the proposal was constructed in accordance with the plans and information submitted and the conditions attached to this approval.	Final sign off	Plng.	

